to warrant such drastic action. In particular, later experience showed that while a certain limited number of articles could be excluded altogether as unnecessary, the economy that could be effected in this way was relatively small. The great bulk of any reduction must be made not by the total exclusion of certain articles but by the exclusion of all beyond certain points. . . ."*

As events subsequently proved, the Shipping Control Committee took too pessimistic a view of the importing capacity of our shipping resources. Instead of only 37 million tons, we succeeded in 1916 in importing 42.3 million tons, so that the restriction of our total imports imposed on us by *the force majeure* of shipping shortage was not 13 million but less than 8 million tons. Unfortunately, however, only a small part of this enforced reduction was planned for by the Board of Trade. After they had examined the *Ineffectual* situation in the light of the Committee's *Board of Trade TC Part* Mr. Runciman reported to the War Committee, on 8th March, 1916, that the utmost deliberate reduction in non-essential imports which at that moment he could definitely hope to achieve by methods of restriction did not exceed 4,000,000 tons. The War Committee recommended that the President of the Board of Trade should have a free hand to use his discretion in cutting down imports, subject to

reference, in particular cases, to the Departments concerned.

How did the 4,000,000 undertaking work out ?

On 24th October, 1916 (seven months after the undertaking to plan a reduction of 4,000,000 tons),

* "Allied Shipping Control," p. 65.